

**City of Reading City Council
Regular Business Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2011**

Vaughn D. Spencer, President of Council, called the meeting to order.

The invocation was given by Rabbi Lipsker of the CHABAD of Berks County.

All present pledged to the flag.

ATTENDANCE

Council President Spencer
Councilor Acosta, District 1
Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2
Councilor Sterner, District 3
Councilor Marmarou, District 4
Councilor Reed, District 5
Councilor Waltman, District 6
Interim Managing Director C. Geffken
City Auditor D. Cituk
City Clerk L. Kelleher
City Solicitor C. Younger
Mayor T. McMahon
Sergeant at Arms Captain R. Schafer
Police Chief W. Heim
Public Works Director C. Jones
Mayor's Assistant F. Denbowski

PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

There were no proclamations or presentations issued at this evenings meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council President Spencer announced that two (2) citizens were registered to address Council on agenda matters. He informed those registered to speak about the remaining public speaking rules.

Steve Burgoon, of North Eighth Street, described his dissatisfaction with the bidding process for Police Department uniforms and the lack of proper accreditation by the company receiving the award of contract.

Ernie Schlegel, of Pear Street, spoke in opposition to the proposed salary for the Managing Director due to the City's financial distress and in comparison with the salaries paid to similar positions in other mid-sized Pennsylvania cities. He expressed the belief that upper management is overpaid which hinders the City's ability to hire proper support staff.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA & MINUTES

Council President Spencer called Council's attention to the agenda prepared for this meeting, including the legislation listed under the Consent Agenda. He noted the need to make the following additions:

- Add fifteen (15) resolutions hiring Police Officers under the Consent Agenda heading
- Remove the award of contract to Hess Embroidery for separate consideration

Consent Agenda Legislation

Award of Contract - Jottan, Inc. of 61 Cathy Lane, Florence, NJ 08518 for the Library Roof Improvements Project at the Main Branch, Southeast Branch, Northeast Branch and Northwest Branch for the Departments of Public Works and Community Development **(Purchasing)**

Resolution 11-2011 – authorizing the application for HRA funds/grant in the amount of \$300,000 dollars for the “Goggle Works Apartments” project and to execute any and all necessary documents and to carry out all procedures as required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and/or the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) **(Redevelopment Auth)**

Resolution 15-31 – 2011 – hiring fifteen (15) Police Officers.

Councilor Sterner moved, seconded by Councilor Acosta, to approve the agenda, as amended, including the legislation listed under the Consent Agenda heading. The motion was approved unanimously.

B. Award of Contract – to Hess Embroidery, 513 Reading Avenue, West Reading, PA 19611, who is the low bidder, at a total bid price of \$195,742.50 for police uniforms **(Purchasing)**

Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to table the Award of Contract to Hess Embroidery.

The contract for Hess Embroidery was tabled by the following vote:

Yeas: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer,

President – 7

Nays: None– 0.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Interim Managing Director Geffken read the report distributed to Council at the meeting covering the following:

- Notification that quality of life ticketing will begin in February
- Announcing the State of the City address on January 31st at 7pm in Council Chambers
- Highlighting the Property Maintenance Divisions abilities as prepared by the Business analyst.

Councilor Goodman inquired if goals have been set for the Property Maintenance Division. Interim Managing Director Geffken stated that the goals are under development.

POLICE CHIEF REPORT

Chief Heim stated that the Reading Police Department has been using a crime reduction strategy which includes Community Oriented Policing methodology. He noted the success of the Department in reducing Part One crimes such as homicide by forty-seven percent (47%), shootings by thirty percent (30%), and Property crime by eighteen percent (18%). He stated that the Department continues to have problems with youth violence and described the difficulties in dealing with the broader issues of youth violence.

Chief Heim stated that the Police Department has been reduced in size by forty (40) officers, and credited the officers on staff for their success in reducing crime. He noted that the Department's crime statistics are ahead of similar sized cities.

Chief Heim stated that sixty-nine (69) Reading Police officers have passed the twenty (20) year service mark and are eligible for retirement. He also stated that the Department is currently testing for inter-department promotions to prepare for the expected retirements in command staff. He described the activities of officer's assigned to special units and added that all six (6) canine officers and dogs are deployed. He also described the upgrade to the security camera system.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz inquired about the Department's strategic plan to address juvenile crime. Chief Heim replied that the Department is using a holistic approach including working with the School District, Probation, etc.

Councilor Marmarou inquired about the Department's plan in case of vast retirements. Chief Heim expressed the belief that keeping a current civil service list will help the Department keep pace with retirements.

Interim Managing Director Geffken noted that the City's also working with PFM to develop a strategic plan to address this issue.

Councilor Sterner noted the Department's success of making quick arrests the majority of the time. He inquired about the stability of the grants that support the various special units.

Chief Heim stated that the majority of the grants are fairly solid and renewable, such as Community Development Block Grant funding, the Reading School District and the Housing Authority.

Councilor Acosta expressed his belief in the need for a Rec program to provide a positive counter to juvenile crime.

Councilor Reed noted the need for citizens to offer private surveillance videos and other information to assist the Department with investigations.

Councilor Waltman described his personal experience with crime noting the lack of understanding individuals have on how committing crime can affect the rest of their lives.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

City Auditor Cituk read the report distributed to Council at the meeting, covering the following:

- Year-end 2010 Admissions Tax Collection
- Year-end 2010 Transfer Tax Collection
- Update on snow and ice grant funds for 2010

Councilor Acosta noted the need to setup a work session with the Auditor to discuss the Auditor's role and duties.

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

Bill No. 1-2011 - amending the City of Reading Codified Ordinances Chapter 1

Administration, Part 5 Boards Departments Commissions Committees and Councils, Section E Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) to increase the number of members from 15 to 21 (**Council Staff/Law**) *Introduced at the Jan 10 regular meeting*

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Acosta, to enact Bill No. 1-2011.

Bill No. 1-2011 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer,
President – 7

Nays: None– 0.

Bill No. 2-2011 - amending the Quality of Life Violation Ticket Process by amending Chapter 5 – Code Enforcement of the City of Reading Codified Ordinances by part 14 section 111 appeal (Law) *Introduced at the Jan 10 regular meeting*

Councilor Acosta moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to enact Bill No. 2-2011.

Bill No. 2-2011 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer,
President – 7

Nays: None– 0.

Bill No. 3-2011 - ordering an investigation under the authority of the Home Rule Charter Section 210, regarding the use of sewer funds (Council Members) *Introduced at the Jan 10 regular meeting*

Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Acosta, to table Bill No. 3-2011.

Bill No. 3-2011 was tabled by the following vote:

Yeas: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer,
President – 7

Nays: None– 0.

Bill No. 4-2011 - setting forth the salary of the Managing Director at \$95,550.00 per annum (Mayor) *Introduced at the Jan 10 regular meeting*

Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to enact Bill No. 4-2011.

Bill No. 4-2011 was enacted by the following vote:

**Yeas: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer,
President – 7**

Nays: None– 0.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES

Council President Spencer read the following ordinance into the record:

A. Ordinance - revising, permanently, the traffic pattern and regulations of the City of Reading to restrict direction of travel for traffic on Klein Avenue to one-way travel, eastbound, from/ between 17th Street to/and 18th St (**Law/Public Works**)

B. Ordinance - that the City of Reading hereby adopts the provisions set forth in Pennsylvania Statutes 21 P.S. Sect. 611 to and including 21 P.S. Sect. 615 regarding the use of properties in violation of zoning laws (as attached hereto) (**Law**)

C. Ordinance - setting forth its intent to issue a series of federally-taxable general obligation notes of the City in the aggregate principal amount not to exceed sixteen million dollars (\$16,000,000) (**Finance**)

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 12-2011 – appointing Carl Geffken as Managing Director (**Mayor**)

Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to adopt Resolution No. 12-2011.

Resolution No. 12-2011 was adopted by the following vote:

**Yeas: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer,
President – 7**

Nays: None– 0.

Resolution 13-2011- upholding and affirming the termination of Officer Ronald Miko, #602, as attached in the Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law **(Council Staff/Law)**

Councilor Sterner moved, seconded by Councilor Acosta, to adopt Resolution No. 13-2011.

Council President Spencer stated that the Resolution contains the findings of fact and the conclusions of law which were determined after Council's consideration of the testimony provided at the two (2) hearings.

Resolution No. 13-2011 was adopted by the following vote:

Yeas: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer, President – 7

Nays: None– 0.

C. Resolution 14–2011 - approving the Conditional Use application submitted by Denise Miller requesting a zoning permit for a two (2) unit conversion at 1051 Chestnut Street with conditions as expressed in the attached Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Decision **(Council Staff/Law)**

Council President read the conditions contained in the findings of fact and conclusions of law attached to the Resolutions.

Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Acosta, to adopt Resolution No. 14-2011.

Resolution No. 14-2011 was adopted by the following vote:

Yeas: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer, President – 7

Nays: None– 0.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilor Sterner announced the Weed & Seed meeting scheduled for Saint Mark's Church at 10th and Windsor Streets this Wednesday at 6pm.

Councilor Marmarou questioned the maximum age for incoming Police Officers. Captain Schaeffer stated that there are no age limitations due to federal law. Ms. Kelleher noted that all candidates must meet the physical agility levels for various age groups.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz announced the upcoming Groundhog Day event at the Pagoda on February 2nd.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the difficulty East Reading residents experience during the winter months caused by the unfinished UGI project on Cotton Street.

Ms. Reed encouraged all citizens to attend this week's Public Hearing to amend the Zoning Ordinance.

Council Members congratulated Interim Managing Director Geffken on his appointment to Managing Director.

Council President Spencer noted the unmet recreation needs for specific juvenile demographics.

Council President Spencer reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule.

Councilor Sterner moved, seconded by Councilor Marmarou, to adjourn the regular meeting of Council.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk